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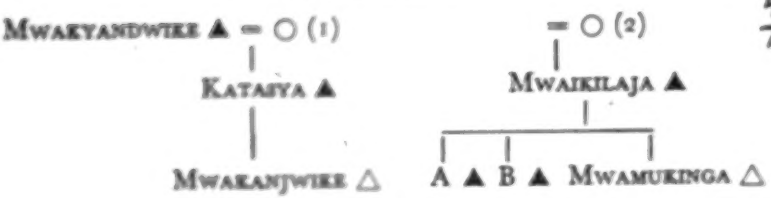

Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is 764
not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanoga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went.

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches 761
have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words.

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chief- 754
dom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya 721
was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had 689
been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows.

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a 764
tree to the left, where they [illegible]at with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent

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too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

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began to prepare my rain, and made the country good. Food started to be plentiful. Why should I be treated thus? I asked. And the shades and Kyala heard me, so it rained *humily* (too much). Do I grow angry by my own power? I do, and I put the rain stones in water, and when Kyala hears me then it rains too much, my anger has results; but if Kyala does not agree then, when I go the next day to the grove, I find there is no water in the potsherd. . . . I work by Kyala's power; when water is in the sherd I know it is he who has helped me. . . . We don't do it ourselves, it rains if the shades and Kyala help us. I cannot say that I do things alone without their help, it is they who give me breath (*imkepe*) and when they help I feel the power, the rain will fall very heavily. . . .

The way in which the weather was connected by the people of Selya with Kasitile is illustrated by the following entry in Godfrey Wilson's note-book:

Mwaipopo the chief had omitted to tell Kasitile formally that their kinsman, Mwaikyambe, had died. Kasitile had come to the funeral in the morning, and gone off in a huff saying, 'They did not tell me.' Mwaipopo then sent Ngulyo (the priest) after him with 1*s.* to pacify him. 'Yes, he paid because he had wronged his father.' Kasitile accepted the 1*s.* and came back. There had been rain during the night, but the early morning was fine. About 11 a.m. it began to rain, softly at first and then hard. I was in Mwaipopo's house drinking beer. They discussed the rain, hinting that it was caused by Kasitile. 'That Kasitile' was the most direct hint I heard. But they discussed the fact that 'this morning it was raining at Kasitile's,' i.e. that the rain began there and spread over the country. The rain was coming from that direction, it was true, but the morning at Kasitile's had been fine. Ngulyo said, 'When I got to Kasitile's place there was rain.' Suddenly there was a hush and someone whispered: 'Sshh! He is at the door, he is coming in', and Kasitile came in. Mwaipopo apologized again, through Ngulyo, for having omitted to call him: 'I had just got back from Tukuyu, I was surprised that no one had told you, Mwakisambwe (*identifying* Kasitile with his great-grandfather *pa*). You too, Ngulyo and Kinegosa, are at fault, you should have told him. When I got to the funeral this morning and was told that Mwakisambwe had gone away again saying no one had told him then I sent you to tell him.' All this was said in a rather plaintive voice to Ngulyo, Kasitile being next Ngulyo. Kasitile said nothing. At noon, when we got up and went out, the rain had lessened, and it stopped almost at once. On my way back from the funeral later, I heard one of the young men, a son of Mwaipopo, who was with me, say to the other: 'Kasitile has forgiven, but only partially, the rain has spoilt the ritual.' About 1 p.m. the

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illness to neglect of his duty to the Kings. All the time we were in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuberculosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the cause of his illness.

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1]

On 2nd July 1935, Kasitile had left his own house and was living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwakyonde, said that he was being 'throttled by the witches' and had invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelelanya*) in the tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were many people with spiritual power (*ukwanga*) so that 'the witches' could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2]

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had quarrelled with Kisengeta, the commoner priest, and others of the principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking the sacred beer (*ubwikeme*), brewed after the millet harvest (*vide supra*, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest, Ngulyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you "overstepped" me' (*i.e.* they had ignored his rights). He himself should have brewed when he confirmed his anger, and slaughtered a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then, when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (*i.e.* bewitched) him. Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young priests (Ngulyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position), they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it. They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-101, 1879. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 100-9.

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younger one' gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions].

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism.

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported:

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1s. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amasye*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country.

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again.

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the

[1] Name of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

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All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially [783]
from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece [782]
to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?'
There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijammapo*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the [778] sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *mmanti* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, [769] one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Neyaniswe,[1] Kyambia Kitali,[1] Ngululu (6), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwamlaqaja [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would [834] wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned [689] from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back!" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobokosa answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobokosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question [684] of his son, Mwanebe (150) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta.

[793]

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests.

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754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!
753 QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?
KAIFULE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kimogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft,
[793] they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat, together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?
KAIFULE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?
688 KAIFULE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but
[783] the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confirm saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] Indipopo (sukai sukulule. The seven clans implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

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and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One woman is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, ties a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your father' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *not* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

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the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'makes' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*vide* p. 69). And when one chief uses lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1937, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwanaumbwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakagile (so, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgement in favour of Mwakagile and refused Mwanaumbwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwanaumbwe was incensed by the judgement and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakagile. So, everyone said, Mwanaumbwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lion in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they are the bananas of Malapula, but Malapula said, "Let's try", and he created moth rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Then Mwakila was defeated. How about you Europeans? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

'We have it, if I choose I give my wife *isipita* and she becomes a lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 104.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only accounts of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'smell the medicines' and become assistant to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.